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STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Nathan Deal
GOVERNOR

March 14, 2011

Honorable Dan Elliot
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW, Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Chairman Elliot:

I am writing to express Georgia's support for a strong freight rail network, not only in our state, but across this entire nation. Georgia's freight rail companies, which include two Class I railroads and 22 shortlines, employ more than 7,200 Georgians, account for over \$480 million of annual payroll and serve nearly 2,000 customers.

Today's regulatory framework has created a reasonable balance between railroads and their customers. Since 1980, rail rates have actually dropped by 55 percent while service has significantly improved and the amount of freight rail activity has nearly doubled. In addition, train accidents are down by 75 percent.

Freight rail is among the most capital intensive industries in the nation, and therefore, it is imperative that continued reinvestment be encouraged. With Georgia and so many other states under pressure to expand the economy and create jobs, any action by the Surface Transportation Board to adopt policies that would discourage private investment would be counterproductive. I would have serious concerns about the imposition of additional regulations that could hurt our consumers and impede the movement of people and goods throughout our country.

I appreciate your consideration of my concerns, and hope the Board will work to ensure a healthy freight rail network that continues to provide a true public benefit to our nation.

Sincerely,

Nathan Deal

Nathan Deal
Governor